



Once in the West: Poems

Christian Wiman

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One of *The New York Times*' 10 Favorite Poetry Books of 2014

National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist

A searing new collection from one of our country's most important poets

*Memories mercies
mostly aren't*

*but there were
I swear
days
veined with grace*

—from "Memory's Mercies"

Once in the West, Christian Wiman's fourth collection, is as intense and intimate as poetry gets—from the "suffering of primal silence" that it plumbs to the "rockshriek of joy" that it achieves and enables. Readers of Wiman's earlier books will recognize the sharp characterizations and humor—"From her I learned the earthworm's exemplary open-mindedness, / its engine of discriminate shit"—as well as his particular brand of reverent rage: "Lord if I implore you please just please leave me alone / is that a prayer that's every instant answered?" But there is something new here, too: moving love poems to his wife, tender glimpses of his children, and, amid the onslaughts of illness and fear and failures, "a trace / of peace."

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